

Message Text

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ACTION LAB-04

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07
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R 230319Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7310
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY JAEURTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 3169

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, MY, ILO
SUBJECT: ILO: 63RD INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE

REF: (A.) STATE 103404; (B) STATE 103403; (C) STATE 102699;
(D) KUALA LUMPUR 1023; (E) 76 KUALA LUMPUR 6228

1. SUMMARY: CHARGE MADE ILO REPRESENTATIONS WITH LABOR MINISTER AND MFA UNDERSECRETARY CHARGED WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. RESPONSE WAS POLITE, BUT GENERALLY NONCOMMITTAL. ASEAN LABOR MINISTERS WILL MEET IN PATTAYA BEFORE THE ILC AND COULD OFFER US AN OPPURTUNITY TO INFLUENCE A COMMON ASEAN POSITION ON ISSUES OF JAMOR IMPORTANCE TO U.S. END SUMMARY.

2. CHARGE MET MAY 19 WITH LABOR MINISTER LEE SAN CHOON AND, SEPARATELY, MFA UNDERSECRETARY AJIT SINGH, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION MATTERS, TO MAKE THE REPRESENTATIONS OUTLINED IN REFTELS B AND C ON THE IMPORTANCE TO THE USG OF THE UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE ON OUR DECISION TO REMAIN IN THE ILO. BOTH RECEIVED OUR REPRESENTATIONS POLITELY, BUT DID NOT COMMENT ON POSITIONS THE GOM MIGHT TAKE IN GENEVA
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ON THE ISSUES OF MAJOR CONCERN TO US. BOTH DID EXPRESS AN INTEREST IN THE USG POSITION ON CHANGING THE ILO STRUCTURE, AND WERE INFORMED THAT WE WOULD PREFER THE STATUS QUO, ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT ONE OF THE KEY ISSUES TO US.

3. LEE NOTED THAT HE WOULD BE MEETING WITH HIS ASEAN MINISTERIAL

COLLEAGUES CHARGED WITH LABOR MATTERS AT PATTAYA MAY 26-28. WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE ASEAN MINISTERS PLANNED TO DISCUSS THE U.S. POSITION IN THE ILO SPECIFICALLY, LEE REPLIED THAT THE SUBJECT WAS NOT ON THE AGENDA BUT THAT IT WOULD PRPBABLY COME UP FOR DISCUSSION.

4. COMMENT. AS WE NOTED AT THE TIME OF THE HOROWITZ VISIT LAST OCTOBER (REFTEL E), AS A NON-ALIGHED MUSLIM STATE MALAYSIA TAKES ITS LEAD ON MIDDLE EAST ISSUES FROM THE ARAB COUNTRIES. DESPITE OUR REPRESENTATIONS THAT THE ISRAELI RESOLUTION ANDARTICLE 17 ISSUES ARE NOT SIMPLY A MATTER OF PROTECTING ISRAEL, THE GOM STILL PERCEIVES THEM IN THAT CONTEXT, AND SO IS UNLIKELY TO BE OF MUCH HELP TO US ON THOSE ISSUES. HOWEVER, MALAYSIA VALUES ITS ASEAN TIES AT LEAST AS HIGHLY AS ITS ISLAMIC ONES AND, IN THE PROBABLY UNLIKELY EVENT THAT THE ASEAN MINISTERS COME TO SOME CONSENSUS AT PATTAYA ON THE U.S. AND THE ILO, MALAYSIA COULD GO ALONG AT GENEVA. ALTHOUGH THE TIME IS SHORT, WE MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER APPROACHING THOSE ASEAN GOVERNMENTS MOST FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO US ON THIS SUBJECT OF A COMMON ASEAN POSITION HELPFUL TO OUR INTERESTS. IF WE MADE INITIAL REPRESENTATIONS ALONG THESE LINES NOW, THEY COULD BE FOLLOWED UP IN GENEVA.

5. MALAYSIA'S GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ILC WILL BE LABOR MINISTER DATUK LEE SAN CHOON. THE WORKER REPRESENTATIVE WILL BE MALAYSIAN TRADES UNION CONGRESS SECRETARY GENERAL YAHAYA BIN MOHD ALI. THE EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVE WILL BE TAN SRI GAN TECK YEOW, PRESIDENT OF THE MALAYAN ARCITULAURAL PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION AND MALAYAN COUNCIL OF EMPLOYERS ORGANIZATION. THE MTUC WILL ALSO BE REPRESENTED BY FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL
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S.J. H. ZAIDI IN HIS POSITION AS ALTERNATE WORKER MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY AND PROBABLY BY PRESIDENT P.P. NARAYANAN AS PRESIDENT OF THE ICFTU.
DILLON

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